

SYLLABUS
PLNT 4020/5020 – Sustainable Agriculture
Spring 2008
MWF 2:10-3:00 pm
AgC 4041

Instructor: Dr. Rik Smith
Email: riksmith@mac.com
Office hours: M-Th 3:00-4:00 pm, or by appointment

Office Phone: 766-3238
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Text (Required): Raman. 2006. *Agricultural Sustainability: principles, processes, and prospects*.
Hawarth Press.
Pollan. 2006. *The Omnivore's Dilemma*. Random House

Course Overview: The focus of this course is on the sustainability of agroecosystems and the human communities that maintain them in the context of regional, national, and global food and fiber requirements. Topics include: the scale of agriculture, low-input systems, current energy and transportation challenges, markets, and integrated crop and livestock production.

Course Format: A combination of lectures and discussions in a seminar style. Expect a one-hour lecture/discussion on Monday and Wednesday with a seminar-style, student led discussion of weekly reading assignments on Friday.

Exams: There will be one test in the semester; a take home essay-style final exam.

Writing Assignments: There will be two writing assignments beginning with a short essay on the general topic, "Sustainability in Agriculture." The second paper will describe your vision for a sustainable agricultural production system. For this second paper, you'll choose an agricultural system to evaluate (perhaps your own family farm?), write an outline, submit a draft, get and give reviews of yours and your peer's papers, and then submit a final copy for a grade. You will receive points for each step of the process. If you feel it's necessary to aid you in preparing for these assignments, we can arrange for a library orientation in early January from Bryan Tronstadt of the Science Library. Graduate students will also write a research proposal covering a topic in sustainable agriculture related to their own research interests. The topic may be of a scientific, economic, sociological, or geographic nature.

Discussion Leadership. Once during the semester (twice for graduate students) you will lead the class in a discussion of the week's reading assignment (or, possibly from a film viewed earlier in the week). You will be expected to give a 5-7 minute introduction and summary of the chapter or video, facilitate active discussion participation among all of the students in the class, and finish up with a 1-3 minute concluding statement that summarizes both the reading and the discussion. You will be graded on your introduction and the background research you've done to prepare (60 pts); your understanding of the subject (30 pts); discussion facilitation, effective questioning, time control, and response to comments (30 pts); and your concluding statement (30 pts).

Discussion Questions. In preparation for every discussion, you will bring with you two questions (four questions for graduate students) from the week's reading assignment. This will help you prepare to participate in the discussion and you'll receive 5 points for the questions when submitted. As an aid to developing your writing skills (this is what professors do), I will edit the questions for grammar and spelling, though no points will be taken for spelling and grammatical errors. Handwritten or late questions will not be accepted.

Course Grading:

Undergraduate Students	
Assignment	Points
Paper 1 (Sustainability Essay)	120
Paper 2 (Production Paper)	300
Discussion Leadership	150
Weekly Discussion Questions	80
Final Exam	150
Total	800

Graduate Students	
Assignment	Points
Paper 1 (Sustainability Essay)	120
Paper 2 (Production Paper)	300
Paper 3 (Research Proposal)	150
Discussion Leadership (2)	300
Weekly Discussion Questions	80
Final Exam	150
Total	1100

Grades will be assigned on a standard scale as follows:

- A: 90% and above
- B: 80% - 90%
- C: 70% - 80%
- D: 60%-70%
- F: less than 60%

The requirements of University of Wyoming Regulation 802, *Procedures and Authorized University Actions in Cases of Academic Dishonesty* will be adhered to strictly. Should you have any questions concerning these requirements, see me during office hours or refer to the following web site: <http://uwadmnweb.uwyo.edu/legal/Uniregs/ur802.htm>.

Class Schedule

Day	Topic	Reading
Jan. 14	Introduction	Raman Ch. 1&2
16	Sustainable Agriculture – Definitions	
18	Discussion: <i>Our National Eating Disorder</i> (Pollan 1-11)	
21	Martin Luther King Jr. Day/Wyoming Equality Day	
23	The Agro-Ecosystem – what is it?	Raman Ch. 3
25	Discussion: <i>The Plant: Corn's Conquest</i> (Pollan 15-31)	
28	Movie: <i>Covering New Ground: Wisconsin's Sustainable Agriculture</i>	
30	Discussion: <i>Covering New Ground: Wisconsin's Sustainable Agriculture</i> (movie)	
Feb. 1	Discussion: <i>The Farm</i> (Pollan 32-56)	
4	Context of Sustainable Agriculture	Raman Ch. 3&4
6	Measures of Sustainability	Raman Ch. 12
8	Discussion: <i>The Elevator</i> (Pollan 57-64)	
18	Human Resources	Raman Ch. 5&6
20	Natural Resources	
15	Discussion: <i>The Feedlot: Making Meat</i> (Pollan 65-84)	
18	Movie: <i>Cuba: The Accidental Revolution</i>	
20	Discussion: <i>The Accidental Revolution</i> (movie)	
22	Discussion: <i>The Processing Plant: Making Complex Foods</i> (Pollan 85-99)	
25	The Land Resource	Raman Ch. 7&8
27	The Soil Resource	
29	Discussion: <i>The Consumer: A Republic of Fat</i> (Pollan 100-108)	
Mar. 3	The Water Resource	Raman Ch. 9
5	Biodiversity	Raman Ch. 10
7	Discussion: <i>The Meal: Fast Food</i> (Pollan 109-119)	
10	Rural Development	Raman Ch. 15
12	Community Supported Agriculture	
14	Discussion: <i>All Flesh is Grass</i> (Pollan 123-133)	
Mar. 17-21	Spring Break	
24	Energy	Raman Ch. 11
26	Transportation	
28	Discussion: <i>Big Organic</i> (Pollan 134-184)	
31	Food & Nutrition	
Apr. 2	The Local Foods Movement & <i>The True Cost of Food</i> (movie)	
4	Discussion: <i>Grass: Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Pasture</i> (Pollan 185-207)	

	Topic	Reading
Apr. 7	Marketing	Raman Ch. 8&9
9	Producer/Consumer Partnerships	
11	Discussion: <i>The Animals: Practicing Complexity</i> (Pollan 208-225)	
14		
16		
18	Discussion: <i>Slaughter: In a Glass Abattoir</i> (Pollan 226-238)	
21	Global Perspectives	Raman Ch. 13
23	International Agriculture	
25	Discussion: “ <i>Greetings from the Non-Barcode People</i> ” (Pollan 239-261)	
28	A Question of Scale – Into the Future	Raman Ch. 14
30	Can we get <i>there</i> from <i>here</i> ?	
May 1	Discussion: <i>The Meal: Grass-Fed</i> (Pollan 262-273)	
7	Final Exam due to my office by 3:15 pm.	